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## SOVIET PREPARATIONS FOR THE CFM MEETING

The Soviet decision to lift the Berlin blockade and ask for another meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers was motivated to a considerable degree by economic considerations. This view has been further substantiated by the 13 May offer of the USSR to resume reciprocal deliveries of wheat and timber from Soviet Zone Germany in return for reparations received from the western zones and by recent indications of increased Soviet interest in expanding trade with the West. It not only has become clear to the Kremlin that the economy of Soviet Zone Germany has suffered as a consequence of the western counter-blockade but, more important, that the economic development of the whole Soviet bloc has been hampered by the imposition of western export controls. It is plain, for example, that those Soviet industries which are dependent upon western imports have made the poorest production records. Confronted with this situation, which stands in marked contrast to the growing economic consolidation and recovery of Western Europe, the USSR may try at the CFM meeting to get western concessions which will give economic relief beyond that offered by the lifting of the Berlin blockade.

**Economic Aims** Whether or not the USSR is approaching the CFM sessions with the intention of reaching a general accord with the West, a primary Soviet aim will probably be to reduce existing East-West economic barriers. Apart from the adverse economic position of the Soviet bloc as a whole, the USSR needs western goods and credits to carry out its plans for domestic and Satellite economic development. Although the USSR could not permit the Satellites to join the European recovery program, the Kremlin

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might seek financial aid for them through such agencies as the International Bank.

**Weapon Against West** A further aim of the USSR at the CFM meeting may be to gain certain economic weapons which can be used against the West. The Kremlin may estimate that an economically revived Germany would inevitably gravitate eastward, particularly in view of the fear of western European countries concerning German competition and of the insatiable demand of the Soviet bloc for capital goods. The USSR may also hope by obtaining a stronger voice in German affairs to reduce Germany's key contribution to the European recovery program and to prevent full economic integration of Germany into the western economic bloc. Moreover, the Kremlin may try to prevent the application of western export controls to Germany, thereby making Germany a channel by which the Soviet bloc can obtain western goods now denied to it.

**Political Maneuvering** In addition to the economic considerations before the USSR in preparing for the CFM meeting, the Kremlin is concerned with political aspects and is intensifying its propaganda efforts to lay the groundwork for political unification of Germany on Soviet terms. Soviet-inspired pronouncements have stressed the need for cooperation and discussion between such German political organizations as the German Economic Commission (DWK) and the German People's Council in the Soviet zone and the Bonn Parliamentary Council and the Bizonal Economic Council in the western zones. Soviet advocacy of such cooperation between German political leaders may presage a Soviet proposal before the CFM for the formal fusion of these organizations as the basis for a unified German government. The Kremlin is also using the recent German People's Congress elections to advance the theme of German political

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unity. Despite the adverse results of these elections from the Soviet view (official returns admitted that 33% of the vote was against the Communist-backed single list), Soviet-controlled propaganda will undoubtedly continue to hail the results as a "mandate" to the occupying powers for peace, German unity, and troop withdrawal and to claim that the election results should be considered a fair cross-section of all German opinion. Meanwhile, the heavy anti-Communist vote will stimulate nationalist aspirations throughout Germany and raise the hope in the German people that unification can be achieved without Soviet domination. The USSR is likely to encourage these hopes so long as it believes it can control east German representatives. In west Germany, the rank and file in the non-Communist parties will be more interested in the establishment of closer relations with the remnants of their corresponding east zone party branches. Western conservative leaders may become less cautious in their contacts with potentially Soviet-controlled representatives from the eastern zone. German Socialist leaders, on the other hand, will remain skeptical of the opportunities for political unity.

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